



The Flame

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Christ at the Center of it All A Holy Ambition

The subject of ambition generates mixed reviews.

The notable 19th century American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow is credited with saying that “most people would succeed in small things if they were not troubled with great ambitions.” His warning is simply that ambition may cause us to miss the opportunities that show up every day right in front of us.

On the other hand Kenny Rogers of stage and screen fame advises “Don’t be afraid to give up the good to go for the great.” Of course, he is also readily known for his advice to “know when to hold ’em and know when to fold ’em.”

While much of scripture warns against prideful desires or even sinful ambitiousness, what is clearly fleshly ambition, Paul notes in 1 Timothy 3:1 that if one desires (i.e. has an ambition for) the office of overseer, that person desires a good thing.

The truth is that all of us have ambitions, some more grandiose than others, but it is a part of our human DNA to look beyond the present for something that reflects a purpose and reason for our lives. Those ambitions center on our families, our social relationships, and our career paths. Keeping them in balance can be a challenge.

For God’s people, however, we must do more than keep our balance. We need to let the One around whom our lives are centered replace mere mortal dreams with visions of His choosing.

Our hopes and ambitions are mere common pebbles. His desires for us, precious stones.

Take Your Next Step

Commit this year to seek from God a holy unsettleness. Ask God to unmask the meagerness of fleshly ambitions and replace them with divine callings.

As you enter His presence, include your declaration to Him of your desire to more fully know and embrace His purpose for your life. Seek the work of the Spirit to birth within you a *holy* ambition that reorients the agendas of your days and redefines the overarching aspirations for the future.

Stepping outside your comfort zone often begins with something very, very small. It’s not about doing something great for God; it’s about letting God do something great in your heart! God never does something great through us until He has done something significant in us!” – Chip Ingram, *Holy Ambition* (p.49).